

USDA NEWS

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How We Employees Responded, In The Aftermath Of Sept. 11

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

It's common knowledge what happened in this country on September 11. What's not so common knowledge is the way that USDA employees responded in the aftermath of those terrorist attacks.

Once the four hijacked jets had slammed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the countryside of Pennsylvania, one of the first questions being asked at USDA was whether the Department had any employees in offices at those locations.

USDA has a number of employees stationed in New York City and even within some proximity to the World Trade Center in Manhattan. However, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service actually had an adjunct office, located on the second floor within the office complex of the U. S. Customs Service, in Building Six of the World Trade Center. According to **Mike Wright**, APHIS's State Plant Health Director for New York, based in Albany, that office was part of APHIS's Plant Protection and Quarantine unit and dealt with PPQ inspection responsibilities on behalf of maritime cargo entries into the harbors of New York and New Jersey.

Elliot Weiss, an APHIS PPQ officer, was scheduled to work in that office on September 11, and was two blocks away, headed toward Building Six, when the first plane hit Building No. 1 of the World Trade Center. "The police wouldn't let us go any further, even though Building Six was still standing," he said. "So I called my boss, and then ended up walking for six hours until I could find transportation to get home."

Willie Martin, APHIS's director of the Port of New York and Brooklyn and Weiss's supervisor, said that he conferred with Weiss on the phone after the first plane hit, and advised him to clear the area. "Then when I got off the phone," Martin recounted, "from my office on the third floor here in Brooklyn I looked out my window and then watched the



Dorothy Woodland, an issues analyst with the Food Safety and Inspection Service, passes on some information while staffing USDA's public affairs duty desk at the governmentwide Office of Homeland Security's Washington, DC-based Emergency Support Team. She was one of many USDA employees around the country who responded, either through their duties with the Department or through volunteer efforts, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11. Note the story on this page.—**PHOTO BY LIZ LAPPING**

second plane circle in over Brooklyn, and go right into Tower Number 2." The responsibilities of that adjunct APHIS office have since been relocated to facilities elsewhere in New York City and New Jersey.

Within three hours after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, the Forest Service had deployed employees from its Southwest Region in Albuquerque, N.M., to participate in an Incident Management Team which—at the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency—supported urban search and rescue operations in New York City.

According to **Cathie Schmidlin**, FS public affairs officer with the Kaibab National Forest in Williams, Ariz., this Team coordinated the reception and distribution of equipment, used by the eight state and local urban search and rescue teams, to rescue survivors. Their second mission was to prepare a Daily Incident Action Plan for the Fire Department of New York City. The Team, headed up by FS Incident Commander **Van Bateman**, remained on-site for over a month.

"The Fire Department of New York City knew that the intergovernmental Incident Management Teams have lots of experience in

planning operations beyond a 48-hour period," Schmidlin explained. "So they requested that type of assistance—and we were able to be extremely helpful to that aspect of the efforts."

Mike Ferris, FS public affairs officer with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in Hood River, Ore., said that two Incident Management Teams, which included employees from FS's Pacific Northwest Region in Portland, Ore., arrived on-site afterwards. Ferris said that Team 3, headed by FS Incident Commander **Joe Stutler**, had responsibility for reception and distribution of equipment, from a warehouse across from lower Manhattan in New Jersey, to support the entire recovery activities on-site. Team 2, headed by FS Incident Commander **Mike Lohrey**, also managed a reception and distribution warehouse at Pier 36 in lower Manhattan, within one-half mile of the incident site. "This included establishing tool caches onsite for use by emergency rescue workers," Ferris noted.

The Food and Nutrition Service has 20 staffers in its field office in lower Manhattan, and they all made it home safely by the end of the day on Sept. 11. By the next day **Joe**
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Secretary Ann M. Veneman



As the holidays approach and 2001 draws to a close, I want to thank all USDA employees for all your hard work and dedication during this year of transition and change.

In just a short period, we have accomplished a great deal together. We have assembled a team that values our career employees and released a policy report detailing our hope for the direction of our major program areas. As a team, we advanced a strong trade agenda to help open markets to help farmers and ranchers. We worked to strengthen our rural communi-

ties, provide food assistance to families in need, and maintained our vigilance in protecting our food supply against devastating pests and diseases. We also made important strides in research initiatives and continued to protect our forests and encourage good conservation practices.

With all these successes, our Department also found new strength, courage, and teamwork in responding to the devastating events of September 11th. Our Forest Service aided rescue operations in New York and Virginia. Emergency food assistance was provided to families who lost loved ones or were displaced from work. We worked within our agencies to ensure the protection of our employees, customers, build-

ings, and programs from potential threats. And, our employees united in volunteering their time to help others or make contributions to charitable groups.

There is a new sense of togetherness in America. A renewed patriotism and strength that really exemplifies why we are such a strong nation which continues to shine and withstand the threat of evil.

As we begin the new year, let's all work to keep that spirit alive in our workplace, our communities, and our homes. We should give thanks for our blessings and reach out to others in need.

May each of you have a joyous, safe, and fulfilling holiday and only the best wishes for a wonderful new year. ❖

These Numbers Are Heading Down; That's A Good Sign

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

The stats are now in—and they reflect that USDA employees were generally more injury-free and healthier at work last year, as they reduced their rate of injuries and illnesses on the job by 4.6 percent. In addition, that percentage exceeded the federal government's goal for such reductions.

Jim Stevens, director of the Safety, Health, and Employee Welfare Division in the Office of Human Resources Management, explained that, as part of an initiative called "Federal Worker 2000," federal departments and agencies were called on to meet individual goals for reducing the rate of workplace injuries and illnesses. "The overall federal goal for FY 2000 was to achieve a reduction of 3 percent in the rate of workplace injuries and illnesses," he noted. "But the stats we got from the U.S. Department of Labor show that USDA actually reduced its rate of workplace injuries and illnesses by 4.6 percent—so we actually exceeded that federal goal."

That's significant, since workers' compensation costs can add up to big dollars. In fact, a memorandum dated July 3, 2001 and titled "Workers' Compensation Program Costs," which Assistant Secretary for Administration **Lou Gallegos** sent to agency-level deputy administrators for management, reported that USDA's annual workers' compensation costs exceeded \$64 million in FY 2000—up

from \$59 million the previous year.

Ella McKoy, manager of USDA's Office of Workers' Compensation Program, noted that workers' compensation at USDA is generally defined as the monetary benefit which the Department provides to those eligible employees who were injured on the job and are therefore at least temporarily unable to perform their normal USDA duties. The November-December 1998 issue of the *USDA News* carried a story on the Department's efforts to reduce its workers' compensation costs.

"An analysis of this [workers' compensation] program shows that much of the cost increase is due to increased medical costs," Gallegos' memo continued. "The major causes of injury were slips, falls, and strains."

Stevens said that the Food Safety and Inspection Service, the Forest Service, and the Agricultural Marketing Service were the three agencies in USDA which reduced their rate of workplace injuries and illnesses during FY 2000.

Victor Randecker, chief of FSIS's Environmental, Health and Safety Branch, noted that his five field safety and health specialists, located at FSIS district offices, have now been encouraged to travel up to 50 percent of their work time to meet with FSIS employees located onsite at federally inspected meat, poultry, and egg product plants around the country. "Their role is to help make those plants a safer working environment for our meat, poultry, and egg processing inspectors."

"Our specialists, working in conjunction with our agency's safety and health manager and our headquarters-based certified industrial hygienist," Randecker added, "initiate such actions as conducting air contaminant

measures in the plants—looking for substances which may cause respiratory problems—and assessing other possible hazards 'on the floor' of those plants."

Laurie Hileman, chief of the Forest Service's Safety, Health, and Uniforms Branch, said that four years ago the agency had only 14 full-time safety and health managers at both headquarters and regional locations. "But we've been increasing those numbers, plus putting an increased emphasis on having those positions located not only at the regional level but specifically at our national forests across the country," she noted.

Jim Schott, AMS's safety and occupational health program manager, said that AMS relies on its collateral duty safety officials to work with agency field managers to spend time at staff meetings discussing safety and health issues—and to ask for employee input on what might help reduce the potential for injuries and illnesses on the job.

"We've also been emphasizing the financial costs to the agency of those injuries and illnesses," he pointed out, "and those monetary stats have hit home."

Schott added that each AMS commodity program pays for all protective equipment items for its employees working on-site, such as protective gloves and eye-wear for lab personnel and shoes with slip-resistant soles for agricultural commodity graders in fruit and vegetable processing plants around the country.

"Our initiatives haven't been anything glamorous," he observed. "They're just good, basic safety practices." ❖

Headlining Some Of Our Recent Initiatives

- *Veneman Reaffirms U.S. Commitment to Ending Hunger at U.N. Food Conference: Urges Continued Development of Biotechnology to Help Reduce Global Malnutrition and Poverty* (USDA News Release No. 0223)
- *USDA Announces Funding for National Centers of Excellence* (No. 0217)
- *Sixteen USDA Executives Receive Presidential Rank Awards* (No. 0205)
- *USDA Announces USDA/1890 National Scholars and Accepts Applications for Next School Year* (No. 0201)
- *USDA Awards 17 Education Grants to 14 Hispanic-Serving Institutions* (No. 0193)
- *USDA to Release Report: "Food and Agricultural Policy: Taking Stock for a New Century"* (No. 0180)
- *USDA Provides Emergency Relief for New York City and Pentagon Rescue Efforts* (No. 0174)

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more detail, go to USDA's News Releases, by clicking onto USDA's Web site at www.usda.gov/newsroom.html

We Employees Responded... continued from pg. 1
Alston, an FNS food program specialist from that office, was staffing a FEMA Disaster Assistance Center in Edison, NJ., that had opened on Sept. 12, while fellow food program specialist **Angie Mackey** worked from her residence. By Sept. 13 Mackey was working at a FEMA center located blocks from 'Ground Zero.'

"Initially, Joe and I were there to assist in the distribution of agricultural food commodities as needed," she said.

Other FNS staffers from its offices in New York City, Boston, and Washington, DC



*"Let's determine which of these priorities we want to tackle first," declares **John Roberts**, an FS fire management specialist. He is facilitating a briefing of an interdepartmental mobilization center management team at the World Trade Center disaster site, in the aftermath of Sept. 11.—PHOTO BY **BOB NICHOLS***

handled requests for assistance in nearly every one of FNS's programs, most significantly its Food Stamp Program. FNS staffers found themselves in the position of working directly with the families of victims and those whose offices had been destroyed. "Besides expediting disaster assistance," said **Irene Fuoco**, director of field operations for FNS's Northeast Region, based in Boston, "many lent a comforting hand or thought to those in need."

She added that some FNS staffers worked out of their residences, calling grocery store retailers to walk them through an alternate

path to process Electronic Benefits Transfer transactions, since a communications disruption throughout New York City had affected some of those transactions.

Karen Ellis, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Office of Inspector General's Northeast Regional Office in New York City, said that almost immediately after the terrorist attacks, the Federal Bureau of Investigation set up a toll-free hotline phone number to follow leads related to those terrorist acts.

"Inspector General **Joyce Fleischman** detailed five special agents from our New York Office to the FBI Counter-Terrorism Task Force, which was responsible for following up on those leads," she said. Ellis noted that OIG agents concentrated on leads focusing on New York City and New Jersey, and performed such duties as conducting surveillance and interviews of witnesses and/or potential suspects. That task force was disbanded on November 20.

According to **Dallas Hayden**, Special Agent-in-Charge of OIG's Great Plains Regional Office in Kansas City, Mo., OIG has about 30

special agents nationwide assigned to multi-agency counter-terrorism/financial task forces, and related investigations. Several agents from that and other OIG regions have been involved in "Operation Green Quest," which was announced by President **George W. Bush** to identify and track possible sources of funding for terrorism. Other OIG agents are conducting dozens of biological threat investigations, many of which involve anthrax hoaxes. **Ernie Hayashi**, a division director under Audit in OIG, said that the Audit staff is working closely with USDA agencies to help identify weaknesses and find solutions for strengthening the Department's operations from potential terrorist threats or attacks.

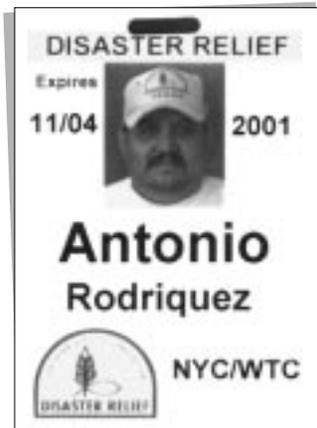
USDA's Office of Crisis Planning and Management has coordinated the staffing of its 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week Emergency Operations Center at USDA headquarters since Sept. 12. "Its purpose," advised OCPM Director **Cliff Oliver**, "is to ensure that USDA remains at a high readiness state, and is prepared to continue carrying out its vital missions, in the event of future threats to this country's national security."

Herb Dickerson, director of OCPM's National Security and Emergency Management Division, added that from Oct. 18 to Nov. 17 USDA employees also staffed both an operations duty desk and a public affairs duty desk for the Department at the governmentwide Office of Homeland Security's Washington, DC-based Emergency Support Team, 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The mission of our employees at that location," he said, "has been to monitor breaking developments related to both homeland security and to USDA's mission, and then provide liaison to appropriate USDA staff for guidance and action, as needed." Since Nov. 17 those two USDA duty desks have been on an 'on-call' operational status.

Many USDA employees around the country were motivated to offer assistance to victims of the terrorist attacks, either by traveling to the disaster sites or through activities within their own respective communities. For example, **Tony Rodriquez**, a Natural Resources Conservation Service soil conservation technician in Jayton, Texas, took a week of annual leave, and, along with several members of his local church, traveled to New York City on Oct. 18 to offer help wherever needed.

Rodriquez, who is also a volunteer firefighter paramedic, was assigned to drive a truck through New York City, transporting water, food, medical supplies, gloves, hardhats, and even donated stuffed teddy bears—and then
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*The ID card for NRCS's **Tony Rodriquez**, as a volunteer in New York City.*



Food Safety

It's "LEARN," And It's Quick!

The word "LEARN" has a whole new dimension to its meaning these days for Food Safety and Inspection Service employees across the country. That's because it refers to a new, more efficient way in which FSIS inspectors can access laboratory results from testing meat, poultry and egg products.

As part of FSIS's responsibility for ensuring that meat, poultry, and egg products are safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled, FSIS inspec-

Employees make these things...

HAPPEN!

tors conduct verification sample testing to monitor for microbiological pathogens, such as E. coli O157:H7, and for excessive levels of antibiotics or hormones. Samples being tested may

include tissue or swab tests from carcasses, samples of finished product at a meat processing plant such as luncheon meat, or samples of ground beef in retail stores.

The Laboratory Electronic Application for Results Notification, or LEARN, provides electronic status reports on the samples that FSIS collects. "LEARN is an automated process that tracks each sample as it is received, analyzed, and reported out," said **Pat Abraham**, director of the FSIS Lab Sample Data Management Staff.

"In the past, our field personnel were notified of test results through a combination of phone calls, fax messages, and multiple computer applications," she explained. "There was

We Employees Responded...continued from pg. 3 delivering those items to fire stations, police stations, schools, area hospitals, and a local Emergency Operations Center. "Then," he recounted, "in the evening we'd go to a disaster field kitchen in Brooklyn where we'd serve food and wash dishes until late at night—and then start the next day by 7 a.m."

At the Pentagon, **Jane Servais** and **Glory** had teamed up to do recovery work at the site of the damage. Servais, head of the Trade Practices Section within the Agricultural Marketing Service's Fruit & Vegetable Programs, and her Australian Shepherd dog **Glory** have been volunteering for rescue and recovery work in the Washington, DC metropolitan area for 10 years.

"But this was different because this terrorist attack resulted in a mass casualty incident," she said. "My previous efforts have been to rescue or recover a single individual, as a lost person, a victim of a violent crime, or a victim of a natural disaster."

"Glory is trained to use her sense of smell to locate—and then indicate to me the specific site of—human remains," she said. "So from September 16 through 27 I'd work my job at USDA, and then Glory and I would work a 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shift, every other day, at the Pentagon, based on administrative leave which my agency granted me for this activity."

"I feel that we helped to bring closure to many family members and friends of those who died at the Pentagon."

Other USDA employees around the country participated in such activities as fundraising and blood drives. For instance, **Lori Dreeszen**, an NRCS fiscal technician in its Nebraska state office in Lincoln, organized a fundraiser among NRCS employees and other federal employees in Nebraska. "We then contributed our donations to the American Red Cross for the New York City/Wash-

ington, DC disaster relief fund," she said.

18 employees from NRCS, the Farm Service Agency, and Rural Development, all based in Morgantown, W.Va., raised nearly \$3,000 for a "September 11th Fund."

"We set up a collection station in the lobby of our federal building, and took turns collecting funds from employees and



"We need to update our map on where the latest Fire Department of New York check-in sites are located," says Ed Paul (left), FS's fuels team coordinator from the Tonto National Forest in Payson, Ariz., as he confers with Pruett Small (center), a county firefighter and Dan Oltrogge, a National Park Service fire management officer, both from Arizona.—PHOTO BY BOB NICHOLS

customers," recounted FSA state secretary **Beth Hoh**. "Donors enjoyed homemade cookies and punch," added RD state secretary **Cathi Ludwig**, "while waiting to sign encouraging messages onto two large banners." "Along with the money," noted **Jim Piper**, NRCS assistant state conservationist for operations, "the banners were then sent to New York by the United Way."

Pamela Phillips, communications chair of USDA's Combined Federal Campaign efforts for 2001, said that the United Way's "September 11th Fund" consists of two location-specific funds—New York City (Code 9012 in the CFC catalogue of charitable groups for 2001) or Washington, DC (Code 9011). "The Fund is designed to aid victims and families affected by

the terrorist attacks," she explained.

Jodi Cushenbery, an NRCS district conservationist based in Independence, Kan., was attending a training class in San Antonio, Texas, on Sept. 11 when the terrorist attacks occurred. "Our class was then dismissed until 1 p.m.," she recalled, "so four of us decided to give blood in case that might help in any rescue efforts." But they found that the waiting time was four hours—and, later that afternoon, when they returned after their training, the lines were even longer.

"Well, we wanted to volunteer there in some way," added classmate **Anna Moore**, an APHIS animal health technician based at the agency's Veterinary Services Area Office in Albany, N.Y. "So we helped serve food and drinks, picked up trash, and watched over children whose parents were giving blood." Cushenbery noted that over 1,200 people volunteered to give blood that day at that site.

Bruce McFarlane, acting director of USDA's Washington, DC-based TARGET Center, which is a state-of-the-art demonstration facility featuring the latest in technologies which enhance accessibility for employees with disabilities, said that he recently co-drafted suggestions to employees with disabilities on how to evacuate USDA office buildings in an emergency.

"That detailed information," he noted, "is on USDA's web site at www.usda.gov/da/usdaooperations under the category 'Occupant Emergency Plans and Emergency Information.'"

Barbara Beitscher, an FSA management analyst and editor of the "APDA Informer," the newsletter of USDA's Association for Persons with Disabilities in Agriculture and which is available at www.apda.usda.gov added that APDA's publication has recently carried several stories related to that general issue. "Especially in light of the tragic events of September 11, this is a continuing issue of concern for our community," she advised. ❖

no update on the status of a sample between the time it was sent to the FSIS laboratories and when the final results were reported.”

LEARN went online on September 24, combining the old notification methods into one application and using fewer agency resources while delivering more up-to-date information. “LEARN provides our personnel with notification on when a sample is received, when it is analyzed, if there are preliminary results, and the final results,” Abraham said. “The program even notifies an inspector if the test on a sample is delayed



“Once I change this tape to the server, then the data backup to our LEARN system will be ready to go,” notes **Mike Terry**, the laboratory systems manager at FSIS’s Eastern Lab in Athens, Ga.—**PHOTO BY TERRIE SUTTON** and explains the reasons behind the delay.”

Each sample that an inspector takes is identified with a collection date, the plant’s establishment number, and a corresponding form number. The samples are sent to an FSIS laboratory, where they are marked with a lab code and assigned a unique internal lab number. “These numbers and codes allow the samples to be tracked through the testing process,” she explained. “The electronic information for each numbered sample is automatically updated in the laboratory computer system several times each day.”

FSIS personnel can access LEARN through an FSIS intrAnet site. “Once an employee logs on to the FSIS server, he or she can check on samples from individual meat, poultry, and egg product establishments, such as a meat slaughterhouse or a poultry processing plant,” she said, “or summaries of results from FSIS districts or circuits around the country.”

Industry and state officials may also obtain information on the status of the sample through LEARN. But establishment officials only receive results from their plant, and state officials only receive results for establishments within their state.

“As our inspectors and field personnel continue to use LEARN, we’ll work to continue to improve the system,” Abraham said.

—**KATIE PRITCHARD**



Natural Resources and Environment

Protect Homes From Wildfires

More and more people are drawn to building homes on the beautiful landscapes of the West. But when those homes lie on the fringe of forests and rangeland, they face the threat of wildfires that know no boundary between private property and wildland.

That’s why staffers from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service teamed up to develop and implement a program to educate those homeowners on how to protect their homes from the inevitable effects of unwanted wildland fire.

Russ Manwaring, who is based in Emmett, Idaho as NRCS’s coordinator for the West Central Highlands Resource Conservation and Development Area, said the National Fire Plan, which was developed by USDA and the U.S. Department of the Interior after the severe 2000 fire season, included funding for fire education in the “wildland urban interface”—or those areas in which homes were built close to forests or rangeland.

“I saw an opportunity to create an educational program to help homeowners protect their residences from wildfire, after I saw the results of a catastrophic firestorm in 1992 that hit the community of Lowman, Idaho,” he said. “But I had no funding sources or staff to implement the idea.”

His idea remained on hold until late fall 2000, when the Western Governors’ Coalition issued a call through the Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program, which offered \$17 million to 17 western states for fire suppression and fire education projects. Manwaring contacted **Danny Ebert**, a Forest Service regional partnership coordinator on the Boise National Forest, based in Boise, Idaho, to develop a grant application for funding a “Fire Education Corps” to educate private property owners about reducing home and neighborhood wildfire risk through five multi-county Resource Conservation and Development Areas in Idaho.

The proposal, which sought \$325,000 to develop a Fire Education Corps, received funding in late 2000 through the Idaho Department of Lands. The funds went to those five RC&Ds. The five then contracted with the Student Conservation Association, a nationwide organization that is the country’s leading provider of outdoor service opportu-

nities for youth, to put the Corps together. More than 500 applications poured in from college age students who wanted to join the Corps. SCA selected 50 applicants who were then trained by experts from the Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, and Bureau of Land Management.

RC&D councils stationed Idaho’s five Fire Education Corps teams in Coeur d’Alene, McCall, Boise, Pocatello, and Salmon. BLM assigned two teams to work in Carson City and Elko, Nevada.

Manwaring said that, for \$50 a week plus room and board, Fire Education Corps teams spent the summer of 2001 conducting home safety evaluations and providing homeowners with fire prevention techniques, using the nationally recognized ‘FIREWISE protocol,’ a program for fire education sponsored by a coalition of state and federal agencies.

“The teams concentrated their efforts in interface areas where fires might start and spread to homes that were surrounded by dense dry fuels,” he said.

Ebert said the teams also worked weekends at local Home Depot stores that were also enlisted as project cooperators. The stores built home mockups that the teams used to demonstrate FIREWISE concepts. Corps members also attended local events such as rodeos, fairs, farmers’ markets, and festivals to provide residents with information and to schedule home evaluations.

Judy Kissinger, an FS public affairs specialist at the agency’s headquarters office in Washington, DC, noted that similar fire prevention education activities—coordinated by FS with participation by BLM, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, and state agencies, as appropriate—have been operational across the country since 1996. Those activities all come under the official title of National Fire Prevention Education Teams. “But this particular Fire Education Corps is different,” she said, “because it was developed in the aftermath of the National Fire Plan and has relied on college age students to spread the word on fire prevention education.”

Local residents and officials lauded the efforts of the Fire Education Corps volunteers.

Manwaring said the partners have applied for funding for 2002 which will enable them to build on the first year’s effort and expand the Fire Education Corps into new communities in Idaho.

—**SHARON NORRIS**



Elsa Murano was sworn in as the under secretary for food safety.

Before joining USDA, from 1997 until being sworn in to this position in October 2001 Murano

served as the director of the Center for Food Safety within the Institute of Food Science and Engineering at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. During this time she also served on the university's Department of Animal Science Research Advisory Committee, plus the Food Safety Response Team of the Texas Agriculture Extension Service, and served from 1999-2001 as the chair of the Food Safety State Initiative Committee of the Texas Agriculture Experiment Station. She held the position of the Center for Food Safety's associate director from 1995-97. In 2000 she was appointed professor in the university's Department of Animal Science, after having been an associate professor in that Department from 1995-2000.

Murano served as a professor-in-charge of research programs at the Linear Accelerator Facility at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa from 1992-95. From 1990-95 she was an assistant professor in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Preventive Medicine at that university.

A native of Havana, Cuba, Murano holds a B.S. degree in biological sciences from Florida International University in Miami, plus an M.S. degree in anaerobic microbiology and a Ph.D. degree in food science and technology, both from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va.

Cathy Woteki, the previous under secretary for food safety, held that position from August 1997 until January 2001 and is now a senior research scientist, concentrating on food safety and human nutrition, with the University of Maryland at College Park. In January she is to become dean of the College of Agriculture at Iowa State University. ❖



Edward "Ted" McPherson was sworn in as USDA's chief financial officer.

Before joining USDA, from 1992 until being sworn in to this position in October 2001 McPherson

served as president and chief executive officer of InterSolve Group of Dallas, Texas. Earlier, in 1989 he had founded the business of InterSolve Group, whose mission is carrying out the agenda of chief executives by leading and assembling talent teams to accomplish

Editor's Roundup

USDA people in the news

important projects for those CEOs. During 1991 he served as chief financial officer for SunAmerica Corporation, a diversified financial services company based in Los Angeles. He joined First RepublicBank Corporation in Dallas in 1973 as an account executive. Then from 1983-88 he served as its executive vice president and chief financial officer, with responsibility for controllership, treasury, tax, financial planning, corporation finance, insurance, and investor relations.

McPherson worked as a management consultant in the Washington, DC office of Booz Allen & Hamilton from 1971-73, with responsibility for the development and execution of client assignments in a variety of public administration entities at the federal, state, and local government levels. He served as a line officer in the U.S. Navy from 1968-71, assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington, DC.

A native of Gettysburg, Pa., McPherson holds a B.A. degree in American civilization from Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., and an M.S. degree in administration from George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Sally Thompson, the previous chief financial officer, held that position from March 1998 until January 2001 and is now director of financial management and assurance with the General Accounting Office in Washington, DC. ❖



Jim Butler was named as the deputy under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs.

Before joining USDA, from July 2000 until he was recently appointed to

this position Butler served as the deputy vice chancellor for agriculture and life sciences at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. He was the associate vice chancellor for external affairs, agriculture and life sciences

for that university from 1998-2000, after having served as its assistant vice chancellor for external affairs, agriculture program from 1990-98.

Butler was executive vice president of the National Wool Growers Association, based in Denver, from 1987-89. From 1985-87 he worked as an Extension sheep specialist with the Cooperative Extension Service at Colorado State University. He worked as a wool warehouse manager and operated extensive ranch operations involving sheep and cattle in Roswell, N.M., from 1979-85. From 1965-2001 he co-owned and co-operated Butler and Son Charolais Ranch, a purebred Charolais cattle operation in Brazos County, Texas.

A native of College Station, Butler holds a B.S. degree in animal science from Texas A&M University, an M.S. degree in animal science from New Mexico State University, and a Ph.D. degree in animal physiology from the University of Arizona.

Enrique Figueroa, the previous deputy under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs, held that position from June 1999 until January 2001 and is currently working as a consultant in several agriculturally-related areas. ❖



Sally Collins was selected as both the associate chief for natural resources in the Forest Service and the agency's chief operating officer. Previously those two positions had been

staffed separately.

From April 2000 until her recent selection for this position Collins served as the Forest Service's associate deputy chief for national forest systems. She worked as the forest supervisor on the Deschutes National Forest, headquartered in Bend, Ore., from 1993-2000, after having been its deputy forest supervisor from 1990-93. From 1987-90 she was a staff officer for lands and minerals on the Deschutes National Forest. She began her career with the Forest Service as an assistant forest planner on the Siuslaw National Forest in Corvallis, Ore., in 1983.

Collins worked for the Bureau of Land Management at its Colorado State Office in Denver for five years from 1978-83. This included service as a mineral leasing coordinator from 1982-83, an environmental coordinator from 1981-82, and a wilderness specialist from 1978-80.

A native of Ames, Iowa, Collins holds a B.S. degree in outdoor recreation from the

University of Colorado and a Master of Public Administration degree, with an emphasis in natural resource management, from the University of Wyoming.

Hilda Diaz-Soltero, the previous FS associate chief for natural resources, served in that position from May 1999 until August 2001 and is now director of FS's Pacific Southwest Research Station in Albany, Calif. **Phil Janik**, the previous FS chief operating officer, served in that position from April 1999 until August 2001 and is now director of the Wildlife, Fish, Water, and Air Research Staff for the agency. ❖



Dick Long was selected as the assistant inspector general for audit in the Office of Inspector General.

From 1987 until he was recently selected for this position Long served as deputy assistant inspector general for audit in OIG. He was OIG's assistant inspector general for analysis and evaluation from 1983-87. During 1982 he served as director of OIG's Farm Programs Division, after serving as acting regional inspector general for OIG's Western Region, based in San Francisco, earlier that year. From 1980-82 he worked as director of OIG's Grain Task Force, which monitored compliance and contracting between USDA and grain companies in USDA's buyback of American grain during the suspension of U.S. grain sales to the [then] Soviet Union.

Long was the assistant director of OIG's Foreign Operations Staff from 1976-80. From 1974-76 he served as the assistant regional inspector general for its Northeast Region, based in Hyattsville, Md. He was a supervisory auditor at OIG headquarters in Washington, DC from 1971-74. From 1967-71 he worked as an auditor and then a supervisory auditor for OIG, based in Saigon, South Vietnam, where he monitored USDA food shipments to that country. He began his 36-year-career with OIG in 1965 as an entry-level auditor in Hyattsville.

A native of Princeton, W. Va., Long holds a B.S. degree in accounting from Concord College in Athens, W. Va. He is a certified internal auditor.

Jim Ebbitt, the previous assistant inspector general for audit in OIG, served in that position from 1987 until May 2001 and is now the deputy inspector general with the U.S. Agency for International Development. ❖



At a ceremony at the U.S. State Department in Washington, DC on October 23, **Mattie Sharpless** was sworn in as the U.S. Ambassador to the Central African Republic.

The former acting administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service, Sharpless served in a variety of positions for the agency in Washington, DC and on foreign assignments since joining FAS in 1965. From July 1999 to January 2001 she served as Special Envoy to Emerging Economies, focusing on initiatives to strengthen the U.S. economic partnership with Sub-Saharan Africa and its integration into the world trading system.

"I am indeed honored that President **George W. Bush** nominated me to serve as the Ambassador to the Central African Republic," she said. "With this appointment, USDA and FAS will have risen to a new height, with two Ambassadors from USDA—**Chris Goldthwait** [who served as USDA's General Sales Manager from November 1993 until May 1999] who is the Ambassador to Chad, and myself."

"This is a recognition of the important role that FAS plays in the foreign policy sphere," Sharpless added. "It also demonstrates the continued strength of the Foreign Agricultural Service as a Foreign Service agency."

"I have known Mattie for many years and have worked closely with her, both in Washington and overseas," said Secretary **Ann M. Veneman**. "She has been a pioneer throughout her career. She is a consummate diplomat, a conscientious manager, a top-notch leader, and, above all, a forceful advocate for American foreign diplomacy, particularly agricultural affairs. In all of her overseas assignments, her sound analytical judgment and policy astuteness have enabled her to manage agricultural and political relations in an unparalleled fashion."

Sharpless's service at FAS encompassed her first overseas assignment during the Kennedy Round Trade Negotiations, to postings at the U.S. Missions to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, France, and to the European Union in Brussels, Belgium. She also served as Agricultural Counselor in Bern, Switzerland, and Rome, Italy, and most recently as Agricultural Minister-Counselor in Paris. She also served as FAS's [then] assistant administrator for foreign

agricultural affairs in the 1990s. The October 1990 issue of the **USDA News** carried her complete biographical sketch, following her selection to that position.

—**HAROLD KANAREK**



Mattie Sharpless (seated) is surrounded by family members, friends, and former colleagues from USDA, including Secretary **Ann M. Veneman** (standing, third from right), as she signs a document following her swearing-in as the U.S. Ambassador to the Central African Republic. — **PHOTO BY ANN THOMAS**

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"Are you ready to go to work now?" asks AMS's **Jane Servais**, as she holds in her right hand a 'tug toy' which is part of the reward system for search work conducted by her rescue dog **Glory**. Servais was exercising Glory in front of USDA's Whitten Building in Washington, DC—prior to heading for the Pentagon to help out in recovery efforts there, in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on September 11. She is dressed in the protective coverall suit she wears on-site, while Glory is dressed in a search vest with her name on it. A number of USDA employees from around the country assisted in a variety of ways in New York City and at the Pentagon, following September 11. Note the story on page 1.—**PHOTO BY COBBY WILLIAMS**



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Missing: 11-08-2001 From: Godwin, NC

D.O.B. 01-08-1986 Sex: Female

Hair: Sandy Eyes: Hazel

Height: 5 ft. 5 in. Weight: 150 lbs.

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